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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

AMERICAN WORLD POLICIES. By WALTER E. WEYL. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917.

The question, What causes war? seems to be like one of those naïve and difficult questions which children ask—the question, for example, Why do people die? Hitherto this question has had about as much chance of being answered satisfactorily as the question asked by a child usually has. For the most part it has been fumbled aside with some superficial explanation. But now people all over the world—including, no doubt, some who “never labored in their minds till now”—are asking this question with a greater intensity than ever before.

There are, it would seem, three ways of approaching the question. You may start from the position that war is essentially an irrational thing, a “great illusion” that waits only for a great *éclaircissement* to destroy it; or you may adopt the view that war is a rational thing, because under the economic conditions to which mankind is subject it is unavoidable; or you may try to find a middle course between these extremes, recognizing fully the proximate economic necessity of war and yet believing that human intelligence may find a way around this necessity.

This last is the way adopted by Mr. Weyl in his book, *American World Policies*, which is chiefly a discourse upon how war may be prevented and how America may help to prevent it. Mr. Weyl analyzes keenly and his explanation of causes is better worth reading than most of what has been written on this subject; but he leans rather to the side of economic fatalism and his conclusions are not of the most hopeful sort.

When the economic ambitions of two nations clash, thinks Mr. Weyl, it is idle to declaim against war's immorality; we must seek instead to discover whether economic readjustments cannot circumscribe or even prevent wars. And economic ambitions necessarily do clash. The case of an industrial nation carrying on a peaceful commerce with an agricultural nation to the equal benefit of both is not a typical but a special case. As European nations become more and

more industrialized, as their birth rates rise and their death rates fall, the need of foreign markets becomes imperative. Though the stake of various classes of the population in the policies of the nation may not be by any means equal, though the nation rather imperfectly represents the economic interests of all, though a war may cost ten times what victory is worth to the present generation, yet nations will fight rather than face the prospect of an economic *débâcle*.

What Mr. Weyl writes under this head may well be taken as a sort of antidote for the views of Mr. Norman Angell, though Mr. Weyl does not mention this writer by name, nor specifically recognize his opinions. When one compares the opposite doctrines of *American World Policies* and *The Great Illusion* one cannot help thinking that Mr. Angell has considerably overstated the extent to which economic interests traverse national boundaries, and one cannot help querying whether Mr. Weyl's exposition would not have been more satisfactory if he had laid more stress upon the fact that nationality is, after all, a historic and psychological rather than an economic phenomenon. The question whether nationality under the influence of public opinion may not become more enlightened, less selfish, is separable, perhaps, from the question whether the people of any nation have common economic interests which may logically lead them to make war. Though the struggle for subsistence may be inevitable, it does seem illogical that this struggle should be carried on upon somewhat arbitrary and accidental national lines. The necessary economic expansion of nations—the demand for markets and for an agricultural base broad enough to support a large population of industrial workers—has been thought of as a factor making for war and as an influence tending toward peace, and probably it may be one or the other according to circumstances. It is not easy to say why civilized nations trading *with one another* under a system of universal free trade should not be able to adjust, without resort to force, most economic questions arising among them. War under such circumstances would seem to be nothing but robbery motivated by exceptional greed or extreme want.

It is also easy to see that the nations are very far from ready to give up economic warfare. But when the industrial system of Western Europe impinges upon backward countries, economic expansion merges into modern Imperialism and Imperialism leads inevitably to war.

Mr. Weyl's analysis of Imperialism is perhaps the most illuminating part of his book. In a comparatively brief space the author gives unusually clear views of all sides of the subject. He is able to make men of commercial mind see the defects of Imperialism and at the same time he succeeds in explaining to a person of pacifist inclinations that Imperialism is not simply an affair of short-sighted greed. He shows how deeply the thing may grow into national consciousness, and how even the workingman may, without being a fool, and in

spite of his being a socialist, see his interest in the support of an Imperialistic policy.

Very shrewd, too, is Mr. Weyl's analysis of the attitude of America toward international problems—an analysis which in large part justifies the viewpoint of the whole book by showing to what an extent the soul of America has, so to speak, grown out of the soil. Our pacifism, it would seem, and our belief that European problems might be easily solved if the nations of Europe would but follow the American example, is largely the product of our economic conditions. The conditions are changing, and this country can no longer consider itself safe from the Imperialistic peril. Our Imperialistic venture of 1898 was premature but it forced us to realize the facts of our position in the world. Today the nation is faced with the necessity of choosing between Imperialism and Internationalism.

The choice of Internationalism requires first of all the attainment of a balanced economic system at home. We must increase our agricultural product; we must develop "our less directly competitive industries"; we must "slacken an increase in our population which would otherwise force us into foreign adventures. In addition it appears to Mr. Weyl that in order to keep Imperialism quiet it is necessary for the nation to tax wealth much more heavily than at present and to make vastly larger collective expenditures. An extensive scheme of social legislation is adumbrated.

Corresponding to this domestic policy there must be foreign policy, of which the most vital principle is "equal opportunity for all nations, and no special advantages for ourselves or others." No attempt should be made to control South America politically or to exploit it industrially. The Monroe Doctrine is not to be interpreted Imperialistically. As for the Open Door in China we are to maintain that policy with caution. We must recognize frankly that the fate of China will be decided by the European Powers in conjunction with Japan. We must co-operate instead of interfering, and about such matters as the Six-Power Loan we must not be too squeamish.

What is the plan of international adjustment to which America should lend her influence? This is the final important question which Mr. Weyl discusses. His exposition of the plans and policies already advocated and his criticisms of them make the final chapters of his book compactly instructive. His own suggestions are frankly tentative; on the whole he seems to favor the assumption by the United States of the obligation to safeguard the neutrality of Constantinople, and to expect a change of heart on the part of England as to the command of the seas. Some kind of joint development of colonies, too, he appears to think ultimately feasible. The really effective forces working for Internationalism, however, would seem to be, in Mr. Weyl's opinion, the tendency to state socialism within the individual nations and the tendency to the formation of huge business concerns overrunning national boundaries. The question whether

the remedies are not worse than the disease is, of course, debatable.

After finishing Mr. Weyl's exceedingly clear and interesting analysis of world politics, one may feel that the most important conclusion reached is that no ultimately satisfactory adjustment between industrial nations can be reached upon purely economic principles. After all, the vital question seems to be (in the author's own words): "Will the nations in this generation or in five generations agree to make sacrifices to permit their rivals to live?"

ITALY, FRANCE, AND BRITAIN AT WAR. By H. G. WELLS. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1917.

The view that the World-War, whatever its proximate economic causes, is essentially an irrational thing, a nightmare troubling the sleep of man's higher nature, the deed of somnambulists who must sooner or later awake—this view is not indeed the exclusive property of Mr. H. G. Wells, but it is one which he has conceived with exceptional clearness. Hope without faith commonly leads not to clearness but to confusion, but Mr. Wells has a faith. Exercising somewhat of the privilege implied in "the will to believe," he has reached a firm and simple conviction regarding the destiny of man. It is in the light of this belief that he interprets the numerous indications of that change which seems to be coming over the spirit of the world's dream. He may be right or wrong; but he is certainly not narrow, and his discussion of human problems is uncommonly free from fumbling or evasiveness. Other things being equal, that man has most insight whose ideal is not simply democracy or the greatest good to the greatest number, but God.

This faith of Mr. Wells's throws a glamour of idealism and of hope over all his analyses of the war phenomena and gives immense suggestiveness to impressions that might easily be construed in quite a commonplace way. Thus, the chapter on "The Passing of the Effigy" embodies something more than the notion, common in America, that monarchical power with all its medieval romance and its medieval trappings is an anachronism: it powerfully conveys the idea that modern life is more deeply and more sincerely democratic than it is itself aware. From General Joffre to the soldier in the trenches whose chief thought is, "Well, it's got to be done," the men whom Mr. Wells saw in his tour of the French and Italian battle-fronts represented, without quite knowing it, the "antithesis of the Effigy."

But there are in Mr. Wells's book plenty of impressions of a less general nature.

Employing those powers of brilliant and logical description which lend so curious a fascination to his scientific romances, the author gives us such pictures of the mountain warfare waged by the Italians